



Maricopa County

News Release

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MONSOON AND MOSQUITOES: A 'PERFECT' MATCH

Don't let mosquitoes breed in your yard and don't let them bite you!

The valley's monsoon storms may bring temporary relief from the heat and water for vegetation, but those may be the only benefits. Monsoon also brings a thriving environment for mosquitoes to breed, so remember to take the proper precautions and Fight the Bite.

Mosquitoes potentially carry West Nile virus which can be a fatal illness. West Nile virus is spread when a mosquito feeds on an infected bird. The mosquito then bites an animal or a person who may develop a fever, muscle aches, headache, or other symptoms relating to WNV. These symptoms may take anywhere from three to fourteen days to appear and only last for a few days. Many people who are infected with WNV will never experience any symptoms.

Everyone is at risk of developing serious illnesses. But individuals who spend a great majority of their day outdoors are at increased risk and so are those with immune deficiencies. Not ALL mosquitoes carry West Nile virus, but, "the more mosquitoes there are, the greater their chance to transmit the disease" states Maricopa County Environmental Services Interim Director, John Kolman.

"The best protection from West Nile virus is to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your yard and avoid being bitten", says Kolman.

Utilize these following tips and be safe this monsoon season:

- Limit outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- If you are outside, cover up by wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants, shoes and socks, if possible. With exceedingly high temperatures, this may be problematic. But ensure you use mosquito repellent if your skin is exposed and ensure you stay hydrated.
- Use mosquito repellent on exposed skin according to label instructions. CDC recommends using repellent containing DEET.
- Eliminate standing water on your property which can become possible mosquito breeding sites. These include but are not limited to standing waters in tires, plastic containers, or any container that can hold water.

The valley has also become victim of the foreclosure crisis creating many vacant properties with untreated swimming pools and ponds. Stagnant bodies of water and green pools are ideal

habitats for mosquitoes to breed. If you suspect a vacant pool in your neighborhood is breeding mosquitoes, call our complaint line at (602) 506-0700.

“Remember, just because a pool is green, does not mean that it is breeding mosquitoes,” warns John Townsend, Vector Control Division Manager with the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. He further advises residents not to treat a pool that has been treated previously by vector control specialists. “Draining your neighbor’s pool that has been treated with mosquito eating fish or applying chemicals yourself totally negates our efforts. Call us first before taking these matters into your own hands.” Vector control specialists place notices on the properties that they visit. Look for these notices before you attempt to treat any pool.

For more information on West Nile virus, to set-up an appointment to obtain mosquito eating fish at no cost to you, to report green pools or file any mosquito related complaint, or for WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, call (602) 506-0700 and visit www.maricopa.gov/wnv.

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